

## SUMMARY OF PROGRESS FOR STEPHEN STROBEL

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By Donald R. Smith, LPC

Stephen began counseling sessions with Donald R. Smith, LPC on 7/7/2014. Since the beginning, he has been very open and honest about the poor choices that he has made that resulted in the criminal charges that he is facing. He shared that he has always had a dream to teach students. He was gifted in music and used music to create the passion with his dream to teach. He has shared remorse for the damage that he has caused to the girl from Ohio. He admits that he shared internet messages and pictures with her that were not appropriate. He says he has never harmed any student that has come under his care. He says he enjoyed the work of teaching students, but it had become very stressful in his second year. He says the expectations to perform at a high level (mostly driven by his own goals) led to his feeling that life became out of control. He says this happened in 2/2014 when he started viewing pornography in order to relieve his stress. For most of his counseling from 7/7/14 to the present, He has been attending the sex addictions support group for those seeking recovery from sexual addictions. He says this group has been helpful for him to cope with his reality. We discussed the way he had substituted the fantasy world that he created on the internet for the reality that was stressful. Since the beginning of counseling he has not viewed pornography or been allowed access to the internet. He has chosen to be productive as he awaits the charges for his crime. He worked in lawn care that kept him busy through the summer and into the fall. He shared that he needed to stay busy and be productive in order to cope with his feelings. By October, 2014, we were working on ways to help him cope by using skills of mindfulness. The term mindfulness describes a person working to stay connected to the present and live in the moment, so that fantasy may not supersede reality. We practiced some of these techniques for him to implement into his life to help him to stay focused. We worked on ways to accept responsibility for attitudes and behaviors in order to address thinking that can lead a person into poor choices. We worked on letting go of the performance based value of himself. He has continued to work the 12 steps of recovery and attend the SA groups. He shared that when his case was turned over to the Federal court, his anxiety level increased and with that problems with sleep and relaxation. We worked together in counseling to discover ways to relax and cope with his anxiety. We discussed ways to use positive self-talk to help cope with feelings of depression and anxiety. He read a book about Victor Frankl and his experience in prison camp and what allowed him to stay focused on gratitude and positive thinking in order to stay alive. He works to keep a Gratitude Journal to list the things in his life that are good and healthy. He has implemented healthy boundaries for himself that has led him to make positive choices about his life. This spring he reports working for Canteen and finds this job rewarding in that it keeps him busy and allows for some interaction with people. We continue to work on his thinking patterns and what helps keep him safe.

I find that Stephen has applied himself very well in the counseling sessions and has made significant progress. He seems to be more stable with the way he manages his feelings. He seems to have an increased understanding of the triggers in his life that led to the poor choices that he made. He seems to have a dedication to prevent the relapse into the old patterns by using his new skills in coping with the feelings through mindfulness. He seems to have positive support system with family and friends that help to keep him grounded. He seems to have a new balance in his life with a healthy focus on proper sleep, healthy activity, exercise and healthy eating. He seems to be feeding his mind with positive thinking and not the old patterns that led to pornography and inappropriate use of the internet. He seems to have a focus on working to build healthy self-worth.

*Donald R. Smith, LPC*

EXHIBIT